

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 ANKARA 08770 021504Z  
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PA-01 INR-07 /021 W  
-----032978 021517Z /53

P R 021405Z DEC 77  
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA  
TO USIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 9691

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USIAC

USIA FOR IOP (INFO: IEU, IBS, IBS/P, S/PRS

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PROP, VOA, TU  
SUBJECT: VOA TURKISH SERVICE COVERAGE OF U.S.-TURKISH RELATIONS

REF: A. STATE 286127, 286536, B. ANKARA 9738

1. WE WERE DISAPPOINTED THAT VOA TURKISH SERVICE BROADCAST THURS 1 DEC VIRTUALLY BURIED REPORT OF STATE DEPT DENIAL OF NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE ON TURKISH "WARNING" TO USG (REFS A). (WE CONSIDER ANY STORY THAT ISN'T IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO INCLUDE IN HEADLINES AS HAVING BEEN BURIED.) TIMES STORY HAD BEEN REPLAYED IN DISTORTED FASHION BY MAJOR TURKISH PAPER (REF B). WE WOULD HAVE THOUGHT DENIAL WOULD HAVE DESERVED MAJOR STRESS, PERHAPS EVEN LEAD TREATMENT ON VOA TURKISH, AS BEING OF SIGNIFICANCE IN U.S.-TURKISH RELATIONS.

2. WE CALLED VOA TURKISH SERVICE CHIEF AND WERE QUITE SURPRISED TO LEARN THAT VOA TURKISH (AND APPARENTLY OTHER LANGUAGE SERVICES) OPERATES UNDER STANDING RULE (NEW TO US) WHICH REQUIRES THEM TO ACCEPT WORLDWIDE NEWS BUDGET AS DETERMINED BY VOA CENTRAL NEWSROOM: FIRST FIVE STORIES  
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IN NEWSROOM BUDGET REPORTEDLY MUST BE USED IN ORDER AS GIVEN. VOA TURKISH SERVICE CAN OBTAIN SOME FLEXIBILITY BY PLEADING SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES. BUT PLEA TO NEWSROOM LAST NIGHT, WE WERE TOLD, ONLY RESULTED IN DENIAL STORY BEING PLACED FOURTH IN VOA TURKISH BUDGET--MISSING ATTENTION-CATCHING HEADLINE TREATMENT GIVEN TO FIRST THREE NEWS STORIES AND LEAVING IMPRESSION THAT VOA BELIEVES

SOUTH AFRICAN ELECTIONS WERE MORE IMPORTANT TO TURKISH LISTENERS.

3. WE BELIEVE THAT IN GENERAL NEWS ITEMS REPRESENTING SIGNIFICANT "INTERSECTION OF INTERESTS" BETWEEN USG POLICY DESIRES AND SPECIFIC AUDIENCE INTERESTS SHOULD TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER WORLDWIDE POLICY CONSIDERATIONS WHICH MAY BE OF LESS IMPORTANCE OR EVEN IRRELEVANT TO AUDIENCE INTERESTS. WE URGE THAT INDIVIDUAL LANGUAGE SERVICES (SPECIFICALLY TURKISH SERVICE) BE GIVEN GREATER LATITUDE TO EXERCISE EDITORIAL JUDGMENT. IT IS APPARENT THAT THE EXISTING PROCEDURE FOR GAINING EXCEPTION TO THE STANDING RULE, DESIGNED TO PERMIT THIS, DOES NOT RPT NOT WORK. PERHAPS TOO GREAT A BURDEN OF PROOF IS REQUIRED; PERHAPS THE BURDEN SHOULD BE ON THE NEWSROOM, TO OVERCOME INDIVIDUAL SERVICE JUDGMENT.

4. ACTION REQUESTED: WOULD APPRECIATE IOP CONSIDERING WITH IBS HOW TURKISH SERVICE CAN BE PERMITTED GREATER EXERCISE OF JUDGMENT ON NEWS PLAY. PLEASE ADVISE. COURTNEY

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## Message Attributes

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**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
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